

METROPOLITAN DADE COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION BOARD

Amended Redland District Designation Report -
District Summary Form

Date of Designation April 29, 1982
Amended Designation Date 10/20/83

Physical Description of District:

The Bauer-Neill-Mitchell House was moved from its original location, in the vicinity of S.W. 268th Street and 159th Avenue, to the Redland Fruit and Spice Park in the Fall of 1982. Within the park, it has been placed on a five acre tract of land on which there are no other structures. The house, which has been scarcely altered since its construction in 1902, is one of the most authentic examples of pioneer architecture still remaining in Dade County.

Statement of Significance:

The Bauer-Neill-Mitchell House is a significant addition to the Redland Fruit and Spice Park. It represents a typical pioneer home from the turn of the century (1902) and looks virtually the same as it did then. This rough-hewn frame construction structure further enhances the character of the Redland District, an early rural crossroad community (See amended individual site form for 24801 S.W. 187th Avenue).

METROPOLITAN DADE COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION BOARD

Amended Redland Fruit and Spice Park Designation Report -
Individual Site In A District

Date of Designation April 29, 1982
Amended Designation Date 10/20/83

Current Condition: Fair

Physical Description of Site:

The Bauer-Neill-Mitchell house is among the most authentic examples of pioneer architecture in Dade County. The one and a half story, wood frame house is rectangular in plan with additions to both sides and to the rear. The main mass has a tall steep gable roof, facing front (north). The kitchen mass, to the right (west), is reputedly the earliest portion of the structure. It also has a steep gable, although the overall mass is lower. The front porch is four bays wide across the front of the main mass. Its shed roof extends the plane of the main gable, but at a lower pitch. This porch, supported on four wood posts across the front, was completely rebuilt after the building was relocated to the park. The porch is reached by five wooden steps located on the center bay. The house sits up on concrete blocks, although originally it rested on large pine logs set upright.

The structural system is one of the building's major attributes. It is built on large, round wood poles, hand-hewn logs with the upper side slightly flattened to receive the flooring. Floor boards are wide, exhibiting circular saw marks. The hand-hewn logs and the circular cut lumber are both evidence of the early construction date and of the primitive methods employed in the pioneer wilderness. Walls' structural system cannot be ascertained, because all walls are presently surfaced with wallboard. The same is true of the roof structural system, all of which is hidden from view at this time. Interior walls originally had exposed structural members, without any surfacing materials. Exterior walls are surfaced in drop siding for the most part, although closer inspection reveals the original vertical board and batten underneath. The kitchen's front elevation is surfaced in wide, flush horizontal boards, which look like the oldest material exposed on any surface. If the kitchen is the earliest part built, then these boards could indeed be the earliest exterior covering. The roof for the entire house is surfaced in corrugated sheet metal although the original material was wood shingles.

The front elevation of the main mass, across from the porch, contains two openings: a double-hung sash window to the left, with 2 over 2 panes, vertically arranged; and the front door to the right, with a large sheet of glass on the upper half and three wood panels on the lower half. The door, although old, is a later addition. Windows are tall, of long, narrow configuration, almost floor to ceiling. Windows in the kitchen wing are double-hung sash, one over one. The wing on the left (east) elevation of the house starts flush with the front plane of the house, then wraps around the rear. This wing has a low shed roof, perpendicular to the plane of the main gable, then turns the corner to reproduce the same flared impression of the front porch roof over the rear porch, now enclosed. The simple, modest details of the house include corner boards and plain wood surrounds on doors and windows.

The house has undergone alterations over its more than 80 years. The front porch was completely rebuilt recently. The rear porch was added, original surfacing materials were covered with newer ones, although all these changes occurred so many years ago to have acquired their own historical significance. In its new location, a small windmill, previously in Crandon Park, has been added on the southeast corner of the lot, and fruit trees are being planted. Eventually it may act as an agricultural museum or house a similar function in connection with the Fruit and Spice Park. The house has never been painted, an in spite of its new location and the alterations it has undergone over the years, the Bauer-Neill-Mitchell house remains one of the best preserved evidences of South Dade pioneer architecture.

Statement of Significance:

The Bauer-Neill-Mitchell house was originally located on the Bauer family homestead which included many acres of land in the vicinity of the intersection of S.W. 268th Street and 159th Avenue. The Bauers homesteaded three adjoining tracts of land beginning in 1902.

The tract on which this structure once stood was proved up by Hannah Bauer. The adjoining parcels were proved up by her two daughters, Martha Arabella and Harriet Eloise.

The Bauers moved to this area, once known as Modello, on the advice of their son, Walter Raleigh. Walter who had enlisted in the Navy was being transferred to Cuba and on his way there visited South Dade and wrote his parents about its potential. In 1902, the Bauers arrived from New York State and settled on a homestead that had been relinquished by a surveyor. They hired another homesteader, a carpenter by trade, Mr. Moss, to build a house. Mr. Moss first built the kitchen portion of the house and later built the adjoining story and one half living quarters. In 1905, Francis Edwin Bauer died of a stroke. The homestead claim was then transferred to his wife, Hannah, who continued to live in the house until 1919.

In July, 1919, Mrs. Bauer sold the house and 20 acres of land to L.R. and I.T. Nixon for \$2,500.00. The Nixon brothers bought the property solely as an investment and by December, 1919, the property was sold to the Neill family.

The Neills, who were farmers, lived in this house with their eight children. They made minor changes to the house, none very significant (See Physical Description). Up until 1980, Markham Neill, one of the Neill's eight children, was still living in this pioneer structure. That year, after Markham's death, his heirs sold the property to Robert and Frances Mitchell. The Mitchells planned to put in a grove where the house stood. Recognizing the structures historical and architectural significance, the Mitchells did not raze it to accommodate their needs. Instead, they contacted the Superintendent of the Fruit and Spice Park and arranged the donation of the house and its move to its present location. The Parks Department now plans to landscape the perimeter of the house to demonstrate the function of landscaping in achieving an energy efficient environment. This project will not affect the structure in any way, but rather continue to demonstrate its usefulness.

Bibliographic References:

Casey, Frank. "Movers Take Oldest House to New Home in Spice Park," The Miami Herald, Neighbors Section, September 2, 1982.

Fruit and Spice Park Fact Sheet, Dade County Park and Recreation Department, 1982.

Hirsh, Rick. "Oldest South Dade House Found, With A Use That's Up-to-Date," The Miami Herald, Neighbors Section, July 1, 1982.

Taylor, Jean. Telephone Interview (by Maria T. Temkin), Miami, September, 1983.

Draft Resolution Designating the Property:

Whereas, the Redland District is a well preserved and rare example of a rural crossroads community in Dade County, and

Whereas, the Redland District is historically significant for its development at the turn of the century which is largely intact, and

Whereas, the preservation of Dade County's historic districts is in the best interest of Dade County and its citizens, and

Whereas, the attached map identifies buildings in the Redland District that are considered significant with a (1) and those considered only significant enough to require a Certificate of Appropriateness for new construction pursuant to Section 10, Part IV of Ordinance 81-13, with a (2), and

Whereas, the Redland District is located in Section 26, T. 56 S., R. 38 E. P.O.B. NE corner of Section 26 thence S 660', W. 348.5', N 660', E. 348.5' to P.O.B. (approximately 5.28 acres) and Section 25, T. 56 S., R. 38 E. NW $\frac{1}{4}$ of NW $\frac{1}{4}$ of NW $\frac{1}{4}$ and NE $\frac{1}{2}$ of SW $\frac{1}{4}$ of NW $\frac{1}{4}$ of NW $\frac{1}{4}$ and W $\frac{1}{2}$ of NE $\frac{1}{4}$ of NW $\frac{1}{4}$ of NW $\frac{1}{4}$ (20 acres), which includes the following addresses: Redland Methodist Church, 24800 S.W. 187th Avenue; Redland Fruit and Spice Park, 24801 S.W. 187th Avenue; and the residences at 24830, 24850, 24890 S.W. 187th Avenue, and

Whereas, the Redland District had been designed on April 13, 1982, and this designation (#8204) had been recorded in the official Records Book 11436, p. 2099 of Dade County, and

Whereas, this resolution is an amendment to the Redland District designation in order to include an additional property known as Bauer-Neill-Mitchell House located within the Redland Fruit and Spice Park at 24801 S.W. 187th Avenue,

Now, therefore, be it resolved that the Historic Preservation Board on Thursday, October 13, 1983 has designated the Redland District as a historic district pursuant to the Metropolitan Dade County Historic Preservation Ordinance (81-13) and that the Redland District is subject to all rights, privileges and requirements of that ordinance.

